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# Security Council

Seventy-third year

*Provisional*

**8404**th meeting

Friday, 16 November 2018, 3 p.m.

New York

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| *President*: | Mr. Ma Zhaoxu | (China) |
| *Members*: | Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | Mrs. Cordova Soria |
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| | Russian Federation | Mr. Polyanskiy |
| | Sweden | Mr. Skoog |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Ms. Pierce |
| | United States of America | Mr. Cohen |

## Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in the Middle East**

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme; and Ms. Rasha Jarhum, Founder and Director of the Peace Track Initiative Yemen.

Ms. Jarhum is joining us via video-teleconference from Ottawa.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

**Mr. Griffiths**: I thank you, Mr. President, for inviting me to this Security Council briefing.

Yemen has long been referred to as the forgotten war. I am very grateful that this is no longer the case. Never has so much international attention and energy been given to this crisis, and rightly so. Yemen remains the largest humanitarian disaster in the world, as we will hear from Mr. Lowcock and Mr. Beasley. The fight against famine is ongoing. Women, children and men are dying from preventable diseases, and the economy remains on the verge of collapse. Those are the reasons that urgent action is required from all of us.

Public opinion and leaders have called urgently to remove the prospect of famine. That is a clear example of the international conscience. For that reason, I personally encourage the Council to support the five requests presented by Mark Lowcock in this Chamber late October (see S/PV.8379). It provides a clear road map that we must all support.

The conflict continues and rages on. We see Al-Hudaydah as the centre of gravity of the war, which is why we deeply welcome recent reports of the reduction of violence on the Al-Hudaydah fronts, and we need it to last. I am extremely grateful to all leaders and others who have called for a cessation of hostilities. There must be no temptation to restart that battle. As a mediator in that conflict, I strongly believe that nothing should be allowed to impede the chance of dialogue and negotiation.

The Council has consistently called on all the parties to avoid any humanitarian catastrophe, and Secretary-General Guterres reminded us of our fears in that regard the other day. But the situation in Al-Hudaydah is fragile and unstable. We need to take urgent action. As members of the Council will recall, we made some progress over the summer to reach a negotiated handover of the port of Al-Hudaydah to the United Nations. I plan to visit Al-Hudaydah next week, along with my colleague Lise Grande, not least to revisit a United Nations supervisory role for the port and to draw attention to the continued need for a pause.

I am encouraged by the recent calls from all parties, the Government of Yemen in particular, as well as Ansar Allah, in addition to the coalition, for the United Nations to step forward at this time on this issue. Let us build on that, rather than retreat.

With increased international attention has come a renewed commitment from the Yemeni parties to working on a political solution. I welcome President Hadi Mansour's announcement of his desire to move swiftly to a political solution, and I know from my contacts in Sana'a that Ansar Allah is also committed to that. With that in mind, I intend to reconvene the parties shortly and to do so in Sweden. In that regard, I thank the Swedish Government through the representative of Sweden here, Ambassador Skoog, for its offer to host those consultations.

I believe that we are close to resolving the preparatory issues that will allow us to make that happen. I am grateful to the coalition for agreeing to our proposed logistical arrangements, and to the coalition and Oman for their agreement to facilitate the medical evacuation of some injured Yemenis out of Sana'a.

This is a crucial moment for Yemen. I have received firm assurances from the leadership of the Yemeni parties — the Government of Yemen first, and then Ansar Allah — that they are committed to attending

those consultations. I believe that they are genuine, and I expect them to continue in that way and appear for those consultations, and indeed, so do the Yemeni people, who are desperate for a political solution to a war in which they are the main victims.

I have spent the last two months seeking support from the parties for an updated version of the framework for negotiations, the elements of which I orally briefed members of the Council on 18 June. The framework is based upon the three references, including resolution 2216 (2015), as wll as the progress made particularly in Kuwait. I reiterate again, as I have done in previous meetings of the Council, our gratitude to the Government of Kuwait for hosting those talks in 2016.

After carefully listening to the parties over the last few months, I am confident that the framework is in line with both the requirements of the Council and the new realities of the conflict in Yemen. The framework, however, is my vision. But its ideas are not mine alone. Every conversation and every negotiation that has taken place before has been the basis for that document. I have, as those present would imagine, shared it with the parties for their views and ultimately, I hope, for their acceptance, just as a basis for negotiation and not to negotiate the text itself, which will be the matter for which we will bring the parties together in the coming weeks and months. When the parties have had the opportunity to brief me on their views on the framework, I would like to put it in front of the Council and seek its endorsement, so that we can use it as a basis for upcoming consultations on substance and agree on a road map towards a transitional agreement, ideally in the next round of consultations.

The framework establishes the principles and parameters for United Nations-led, inclusive Yemeni negotiations to end the war, resolve the conflict and start a political transition process. It includes a set of interim security and political arrangements, including mechanisms, sequencing and guarantees for implementation. It is a very broad-brush document, as it is intended only as a basis for detailed negotiation. However, I believe that the arrangements outlined and referred to will allow for an end to the fighting inside Yemen, the return of Yemen's friendly relations with neighbouring States and the restoring of State institutions.

I believe that the framework reflects the resolutions of the Council in fact and in words and in no way derogates from them. My task is to shape a way towards a principled compromise that allows the people of Yemen to live again in peace. It sets out a political solution that is available and, as I have said, is there to be adopted if we are to have the fortune to move forward with it.

A mediator's principal task is to bring the parties together to resolve their differences through dialogue and compromise rather than combat and conflict. That is what I hope we will see soon as we move forward. We are doing all that we can to achieve those goals but, as I said in the Chamber in April, the events of war can always take peace off the table (see S/PV.8235). We must not let that happen now.

We are working very hard to finalize the logistical arrangements. I will go to Sana'a next week for that purpose. I will meet the leader of Ansar Allah, Abdulmalik al-Houthi, with whom I have had detailed discussions in previous months about the need for engagement, consultations and, ultimately, negotiations. It will be useful to me to again hear his leadership on such matters. I will also be happy to travel with the delegation to the consultations, if needed.

For a political settlement to be sustainable, it must be inclusive. It is a requirement of the resolutions concerning this conflict. It must enjoy the support of the Yemeni people. I am fortunate to have the support of the Yemeni women's technical advisory group, which not only came with us to Geneva but also is providing specific ideas on tactics and strategies as we move forward towards consultations. We are also looking at using technology to strengthen inclusivity and provide an interactive platform for the voices that cannot travel but remain in Yemen to be heard as we gather the parties around the table. In the twenty-first century, in our view, physical presence is not the only way to strengthen inclusion.

The southern question is always on our minds. We are currently enjoying a period of calm but the threat of violence, destabilization and instability is ever present. I have spent a great deal of time listening to southern groups and exploring ways to address their concerns. Ultimately, the just resolution of the southern issue should be achieved, in my view, during the transitional period. It should meet the legitimate aspirations of the people of Yemen and ensure that they enjoy the benefits of good governance. That almost goes without saying, but I think that it is important to record that objective

here. Southern actors will clearly have a crucial role in safeguarding the outcomes of the peace process on which we are now working, and it is vital to secure their buy-in. However, it is my responsibility to alert the Security Council that there is unfinished business in the south of Yemen.

I would like to take the opportunity to announce to the members of the Council that we are about to conclude — and I had hoped to announce such a conclusion — an agreement between the parties on the exchange of prisoners and detainees. I think that it would and may still be the first signed agreement between the parties to the conflict. We have made great progress. President Hadi Mansour was the first to urge us to focus on that. I also had the support of Abdulmalik al-Houthi when I first met him. I welcome the commitment of all parties that have engaged in good faith — the coalition, the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah. It is an important humanitarian gesture and a timely message of hope to the Yemeni people. As I said, I had hoped that we would have been able to announce the formalization of that agreement today. However, I am sure that it will happen in the coming days.

I strongly believe that the parties need to get together without conditions, also under our auspices, to jointly address the dire economic situation in Yemen, including the rapid deterioration of the Yemeni rial — a key contributing aspect to famine. It is useful to note and important to give credit to the Government of Yemen for the fact that the depreciation of the rial, which was so alarming in past weeks, seems to have flattened out. I think that it is important to note that extremely significant measure of the stress in Yemen. That should not be a matter subject to political consideration when the victims are the Yemeni people. Indeed, that is not a confidence-building measure. It is a moral responsibility and the obligation of the parties to the Yemeni people. I hope, and have been planning for some time, soon to convene a meeting of the Central Bank of Yemen, to be facilitated by the International Monetary Fund, in order to agree on an action plan that would allow the Central Bank of Yemen to discharge its responsibilities across the country and for all people of Yemen.

Finally, we must seize such positive international momentum on Yemen. The attention to Yemen is a great asset, as is the unity of the Council. I strongly believe that this is an opportunity at a crucial moment to pursue a comprehensive and inclusive political settlement to the conflict. Yemen can indeed no longer be referred to as a forgotten war. I would ask the Council to consider the fact that all our efforts should be directed towards at least two issues. First is the humanitarian priority, to which, I am sure, Mr. Lowcock and Mr. Beasley will refer shortly. That is the most important priority for the people of Yemen. And, secondly, let us hope that there will be no acts or omissions that prevent the convening of the parties for consultations in Sweden in the coming weeks. It is an opportunity that has been long awaited by the people of Yemen and that the Council has long asked of the parties. I think that we are almost there. I do not know if we will succeed and what the odds are. We need to focus on ensuring that nothing disrupts the path to that meeting.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Griffiths for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lowcock.

**Mr. Lowcock**: On 23 October, I warned the Security Council that a grave economic crisis and escalating conflict had pushed Yemen closer to famine than ever before (see S/PV.8379).

Shortly after that briefing, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network released a new alert. The Early Warning Systems Network, which is supported by the United States, is one of the leading providers of early warning and analysis on acute food insecurity. According to the Network, "Yemen faces the largest food security emergency in the world, and the worsening humanitarian outlook requires urgent action to reduce the likelihood of significant loss of life".

The Famine Early Warning Systems Network characterizes the food security situation in Yemen as facing "a catastrophic deterioration" and warns that many of the millions of the severely food-insecure people in the country "face food consumption gaps large enough to lead to increases in human mortality".

So is it a famine? With respect, I fear that that is the wrong question. A very painful lesson learned from the two famines declared this century — in Somalia in 2011 and in South Sudan in 2017 — is the fact that most fatalities occur before famine is declared. So to be clear, I am not saying that widespread famine has already taken hold in Yemen, but that is what we are trying to prevent. It is abundantly clear that Yemen is already facing mass hunger and severe food insecurity.

We are fortunate to have David Beasley here today. He will describe the food security situation in more detail and tell us about his visit to the country earlier this week. In my assessment, Yemen has so far avoided famine for just two reasons.

First, the United Nations and humanitarian agencies are implementing the largest aid operation in the world, reaching nearly 8 million Yemenis across the country every month. Secondly, Member States and other key stakeholders have taken action when the risk of famine has intensified in the past, for example by working together to lift the temporary blockade this time last year and by providing generous, flexible, large-scale funding early this year. As I emphasized in my last briefing, we urgently need the Council to take action again now. That is why I sought the Council's support on five key requests, which, if they are fully implemented, would save the lives of millions of Yemenis, sparing them from an entirely avoidable catastrophe. So today I would like to update the Council on where we stand with those five actions.

My first request was for a cessation of hostilities to be implemented in and around the infrastructure and facilities on which the aid operation and commercial importers rely. Many Council members made similar requests during the 23 October meeting and after that, and the Secretary-General reinforced that position in his statement of 2 November. What in fact happened was that violence escalated on several fronts immediately after my last briefing. Since 30 October, United Nations sources have observed nearly 800 separate incidents of shelling, armed clashes or air strikes across Yemen. Some of the fiercest fighting has been in Al-Hudaydah, which is where most of the crucial infrastructure needing protection actually is. Those incidents too often have devastating consequences for civilians. To cite just one recent incident, a bus carrying civilians fleeing conflict in Al-Hudaydah came under attack on Tuesday, killing seven people.

Critical civilian infrastructure has not been spared either. Last Sunday, patients — some of whom were still connected to medical devices — reportedly fled Al-Hudaydah's largest public hospital into the street amidst large explosions. Several days later, the same hospital was damaged by shrapnel, and then again by shelling yesterday. A second hospital was damaged after becoming caught up in the crossfire as front lines shifted around the city. Fighters also took up positions inside that hospital and on its roof, placing the entire facility at grave risk. The impact of violence in Al-Hudaydah has compounded the chaos and hardships facing people who were already in desperate straits. Needs are enormous; perhaps 30 per cent of people still in the city are barely surviving, including about a quarter of children who are malnourished. As the Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen, Lise Grande, recently noted, the most vulnerable people in the whole country are sitting there in Al-Hudaydah. These are the poorest of the poor.

The fighting has also had an impact on humanitarian operations. Some programmes have been scaled back in Al-Hudaydah and the staff overseeing them have left — I hope only temporarily. Other important emergency programmes remain in place, and agencies are restocking supplies inside Al-Hudaydah in an attempt to ensure that critical humanitarian operations can continue if the situation gets worse.

So, for all the reasons Martin Griffiths has just cited and those I have just given to the Council, it remains urgent, as Martin has said, for the parties to agree a cessation of hostilities. We both issued statements reiterating that earlier this week. In the past two days, we have seen a welcome de-escalation and what appears to be at least a pause in the fighting in Al-Hudaydah, but what we need to know is that this lull is going to be sustained. Let me repeat again that, as we have previously said and as Martin touched on, the United Nations is ready to play an enhanced role in ensuring the appropriate use of key facilities around Al-Hudaydah, such as the port.

The second area for which I sought the support of the Council is to facilitate and protect the supply of food and other essential goods across the country. As members know, Yemen imports nearly all of its food, fuel and medicine. Commercial food imports in October through the ports of Al-Hudaydah and Saleef — where most of the food enters the country — fell by more than 50 per cent as compared to September. Only 17 ships discharged cargo in those ports in October — the second-lowest monthly figure ever recorded. To avoid famine, it is essential to keep all ports functioning and to remove obstacles to imports or the domestic distribution of essential goods. I therefore welcome the Government of Yemen's decision this week to suspend Cabinet Decree 75 for food imports. Experts had warned that the immediate implementation of that Decree could lead to worse food shortages and higher prices. But although the Government has suspended

Decree 75 for food, it remains in place for fuel, which is critical to pumping drinking water, maintaining sanitation systems and running hospital generators.

Since the enforcement of Decree 75 for fuel began last month, the coalition has, at the request of the Government of Yemen, denied entry to four commercial vessels carrying nearly 53,000 tons of fuel. That is equivalent to more than 40 per cent of average fuel imports in any given month since the temporary blockade was lifted about a year ago. To protect the food supply and avoid famine, parties to the conflict must also avoid damaging or cutting off access to supporting infrastructure. The main eastern road from Al-Hudaydah to Sana'a remains closed due to insecurity, forcing traders and humanitarian partners to reroute shipments, which costs more money and more time. Several humanitarian sites are in areas in Al-Hudaydah that have recently changed hands. They include the Red Sea Mills, which contain enough grain to feed more than 3 million people for a month. I understand that talks are proceeding on options to ensure that those critical supplies can now reach the people who need them.

My third request was for the provision of support for the Yemeni economy by injecting foreign exchange and paying salaries and pensions. Those measures will protect against famine by boosting people's ability to purchase food and other essential goods and by supporting traders in keeping commercial imports flowing. In October, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia deposited $200 million in the Central Bank of Yemen to strengthen the Yemeni rial. That welcome move has helped to bring the exchange rate down from a peak of about 800 rial to the United States dollar in early October, to about 670 rial to the dollar today. It has also helped to finance imports of food and other essential commodities. Some reports also indicate that that deposit may be helping to lower food prices slightly. Those are important improvements.

At the same time, we must recall that the exchange rate before the conflict escalated four years ago was 215 rial to the dollar, so it still costs more than three times as many rials to buy a dollar than it did before the conflict escalated. In the past year alone, the rial has lost nearly 50 per cent of its value. It is also important to note that applications to access Central Bank credit against the Saudi deposit have exceeded the available funds — a sign that traders are eager to maintain the flow of essential imports if they have access to adequate capital. Those developments demonstrate that foreign exchange injections are enormously effective in this environment. We need a continuing, large-scale flow of foreign exchange into the market to finance adequate levels of imports and to support the currency at a level that will make food and other commodity prices affordable.

Regarding salary payments, I welcomed the news in my last briefing that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates would provide $70 million to cover allowances for 135,000 teachers. We see that as a best practice, and discussions with potential donors on replicating it for health and sanitation workers, as well as for pensioners, are at an advanced stage. Several weeks ago, the Houthi authorities in Sana'a also released some of the backlog in civil servant salaries. We hope that will be a first step towards the resumption of regular salary payments across the country.

My fourth request was for an increase funding and support to the aid operation. This year, we are extremely grateful to all our donors for providing $2.3 billion so far to the 2018 United Nations coordinated humanitarian response plan. That is nearly 80 per cent of the requirements we estimated at the beginning of the year. Given developments over the past few months, we are now discussing additional funding for this year with donors. I hope decisions on that will be taken by the relevant donors very soon. Given the increase in needs, as a result of the intensified fighting and the further recent collapse of the economy, I can say that next year's response plan will be substantially larger. I will announce the precise amount shortly. The Secretary-General plans to convene a high-level conference on Yemen with a focus on the 2019 humanitarian response plan in February.

My fifth request called on all belligerents to work with the Special Envoy to end the conflict, and I will not repeat Martin's comprehensive account of where the process stands. I echo his calls to move quickly towards confidence-building measures and consultations, and from there to resume full negotiations. Council members have just heard Martin confirm his support for my five requests. I want to emphasize that those five requests need to be seen as a package. Substantial new action is needed on all of them if massive loss of life in a terrible famine is to be avoided. I am therefore again seeking Council members' individual and collective support — both practical and political — on those five areas.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Lowcock for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Beasley.

**Mr. Beasley**: I thank you, Sir, for convening this briefing on Yemen. It is good to be with my two colleagues and friends, whom I highly respect.

I know that when appearing in this hallowed Chamber, one is expected to speak in measured tones and that points are to be made with caution. In diplomacy, often that is the best and smoothest way, but today I am not sure that is possible. I have just come from three days on the ground in Yemen, and soft words will not do justice to what is happening to the children, mothers, fathers and families in that country. What I have seen this week in Yemen is the stuff of nightmares, horror, deprivation and misery. That country of some 28 to 29 million people has been suffering for years, but now, as some would say, it is on the brink of catastrophe. But it is not on the brink of catastrophe — it is actually a catastrophe, and each and everyone of us has our own selves to blame. The question is: What are we going to do about it?

The conditions that everyday Yemenis endure are presently only because of war. They would not exist at all if stubborn men would just sit down and talk instead of fighting. Yemen is perhaps the prime example of why the Council went on record in May recognizing the link between conflict and hunger. Let me put it in true human terms, because Council members will hear a lot about numbers today and tomorrow.

But that is just not about numbers; it is about real people with names, like little Mohamed, whom I saw just two days ago in a hospital in Sana'a. That little eight-month old boy's parents had driven 300 kilometres to the only hospital that had some support; they were trying to save their little boy's life. He suffered from acute malnutrition and weighed just 3.3 kilograms, which is about one-third of what a child of that age should weigh. Little Mohamed was not much more than skin and bones. Council members have seen such pictures in the news. Those are not isolated incidents; they are the reality of children throughout the country.

I said that he was not much more than skin and bones, because the sad part is that little Mohamed died yesterday. It is hard to walk through a hospital. In room after room, one sees these little children dying before ones very eyes. I remember one little child whose feet were sticking out of the blanket. As a father, I thought it was cute and I went to tickle one little foot, hoping for a smile. But there was no smile. It was like tickling a ghost. There are no smiles, no laughter; the crying is weak; they are sick, hungry and dying. The chief doctor at the hospital told me they are getting about 50 cases a day of severely malnourished children. They only have room for 20. When I asked what they do about the other 30, he answered that they send them home to die. Four years ago, the hospital did not even have an area for malnourished children.

I will focus this briefing on three main elements: first, the economic impact of the political and military crisis; secondly, the deteriorating food security situation; and thirdly, what the United Nations, the World Food Programme and other actors must to do get Yemen on its feet.

First, Yemen is in economic collapse. The people of Yemen have endured war for years, but what is dramatically changing the situation on the ground today is economic collapse. The value of the Yemeni rial has dropped by a staggering 235 per cent since January 2015 — from 215 rial to the United States dollar to 720, give or take. Imagine what that does to a household — two-thirds of its purchasing power is just gone. In many cases, the price of simple, basic food staples has doubled in the past eight months. That is happening while household incomes are going in the other direction. Eight million livelihoods have disappeared; 1.2 million civil servants are without pay or have had little financial support in the past few years. Those 1.2 million support households of about 8 million people out of the entire population of 29 million.

There are massive currency problems, with no incomes or access to cash. For a country that is dependent on imports for the basic needs of life, that is a disaster. Other countries that have experienced hyperinflation, such as South Sudan and Zimbabwe, can at least grow their own food, but Yemen cannot. It relies on imports. That is the primary reason why hunger is on a dramatic increase.

Second is the deteriorating food security. Based on our latest assessment, we know for a fact that it is extremely dire. Of 28 million Yemenis, we believe that as many as 18 million are food insecure, but as many as or more than 12 million Yemenis — almost half of the entire country — are just one step away from famine. They are on the brink of starvation; they do not know

when their next meal is coming from. As Mark said, once you declare famine it is way too late.

Those are children and adults dying every day. They may not be yet classified as dying of famine, but we are marching towards disaster. The number has doubled in the past year and a half, and it is getting worse, largely because of the currency decline. Our monitoring systems show that there are 3.6 million more hungry people in Yemen than there were just three months ago. In the past month alone, the number of hungry people has risen by 1.6 million. I believe we do not need to wait for formal declarations about famine or even a full report to act.

We must act now. I believe that because of what I saw with my very own eyes and heard this past week. Children are already dying across the country. Right now, the World Food Programme is helping about 8 million people a month in Yemen. We are especially thankful for the generosity of our donors, the hard work of about 500 staff members who put their lives on the line every single day in that country, 30 cooperating partner agencies and the support of other United Nations agencies as well.

The World Food Programme currently has enough food cereals in the country for two months of assistance to help about 6.8 million people. As of early November, we have several food shipments en route to various ports in the country. We have even started to use the port of Salalah, in neighbouring Oman, as a supplementary route. We are anticipating any potential catastrophic situation at any port to assure that we have alternatives in place to minimize the impact of what is already a dire situation. We are looking at alternative ports in Saudi Arabia, as well as in Oman, as I mentioned, so that the pipeline will not be broken should there be a devastation of the port in Al-Hudaydah. Hostilities must stop.

Not only did I go to Aden and Sana'a, but I also went to Al-Hudaydah. Let me tell the Council about visiting Al-Hudaydah. What normally is a three- or four-hour simple, nice, beautiful drive is not so beautiful and nice any more. It is double that amount of time going through checkpoint after checkpoint; bridges have been bombed and, whatever the case may be, because of the war front we are having to move and go different routes. It is quite a chore. Lise Grande and I went together.

Al-Hudaydah is like a ghost town. Representatives will have seen those kind of movies where it is empty. One sees a dog walking here or there, and that is about the extent of it. The way we are doing food distribution right now is to give people enough for a whole month so we minimize their being on the streets, because people do not want to walk out on the streets because they are afraid they will get killed. One cannot imagine the number of people coming up to me and wanting to hug me and say "Thank you for being here". But then they would say, "Please do not leave". Because while we were there, there was no fighting. "Please do not leave. Stay a few days. Give us peace. Give us some hope." I said that I had to leave so that I could help tell the world how bad it really is and that they deserve better than this.

My third point concerns the humanitarian and economic intervention is required. I agree with absolutely everything that Mark was talking about. This is not just one element. It is a package. We must work together, but let me clear that starvation is on the horizon unless circumstances change, and change immediately. The war has taken its toll over four years, but the economic crisis will accelerate that damage in a just a matter of months. We must combine humanitarian assistance with an all-out effort to restore the Yemeni economy. Let me be crystal clear — humanitarian assistance alone cannot reverse the dire situation. We need a twin-track approach.

First, we need to put more hard currency into the Yemeni economy and the hands of the Yemeni people, as Mark referred to. The rial needs to be stabilized to at least a 450-to-$1 ratio so people are able to buy essential things again and to get the economy rolling again. This would require a cash injection of approximately $200 million per month.

Secondly, we need to scale up our assistance in order to help 12 million people per month. As I said earlier, we are helping about 8 million. We need to scale up to approximately 12 million, give or take 1 or 2 million. That would require about $150 million to $160 million a month just for food and assistance, versus the approximately $100 million a month that we are spending at the World Food Programme. If we are able to raise the funds of $150 million to $160 million a month just for the food assistance alone, we hope and believe that about $50 million of that could be used as cash-based assistance for the most food-insecure people, and that cash-based assistance would not only save lives, but would also help inject much-needed liquidity into the economy. We work with store owners, family-

owned businesses to help them provide the liquidity to stimulate the economy in these communities and to get that engine going again, which is critical for the stability of this country.

But as we begin this work, the warring parties must guarantee access, especially in and out of Al-Hudaydah port. If Al-Hudaydah port shuts down without alternatives, it will be a devastation beyond our furthest imagination. Little boys and little girls will die. We cannot truly meet the need unless we have much more improved access throughout the country — for logistics corridors, ports and the ability to monitor and assess. We need expedited clearances for our shipments, visas, equipment requests and personnel.

Yemen is on the brink so, together, we must act. The international community must use all its power to stop this war and rescue the Yemen economy and the Yemeni people. Humanitarian organizations, like World Food Programme, must get the resources and the access they need to save the lives of innocent children and families. Otherwise, at the World Food Programme and other humanitarian agencies, we will be in the position of deciding which children eat and which children do not eat, which children live and which children die. How would anyone in this Chamber like that job?

Every child deserves better. The words "heartbreaking" and "tragic" do not do the situation in Yemen justice. All of humankind should be ashamed of what is happening in that country. With all the wealth in the world today, all the intellectual knowledge, and all the technology the world has today, there should not be a single child going to bed hungry in Yemen, much less anywhere else. It is long, oh so very long, past the time to stop it.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Beasley for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Jarhum.

**Ms. Jarhum**: I thank the Council for providing me with the opportunity to brief the Council on behalf of the Peace Track Initiative and the Women's Solidarity Network — a coalition of 250 Yemeni women and women-led organizations working on the protection of women and peacebuilding in Yemen.

Yemen has been spiralling into a devastating war for over four years. In our country, there is a bleeding wound in every home and a story of continuing loss and despair. Dying children scream "Do not bury me!" as the conflict rages, but their cries go unnoticed. The use of explosive weapons by the forces affiliated with the internationally recognized Government and its allies in the Arab coalition, as well as the Houthis, has resulted in many civilian casualties. The warring parties continue to disregard international humanitarian law with virtual impunity in Al-Hudaydah, Taiz and across the country. Meanwhile, actors directly or indirectly involved in the conflict are disregarding the main principles of the Arms Trade Treaty. The extensive use of landmines by the Houthis has resulted in hundreds of deaths and injuries and is a direct impediment to accessing aid. Future generations will pay the price.

As we prepare for the upcoming International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, I would like to remind the Council that Yemeni women were already suffering from legal, institutional and social violence. As a result, they now bear the burden of the multidimensional insecurities of this war. Documented cases of gender-based violence, including rape, rose by 70 per cent in the first five months of the war. Child marriages increased by 66 per cent.

Women in the besieged city of Taiz spend long hours walking through rough terrain or traversing areas controlled by armed groups, where they are repeatedly harassed. They do that to provide their families with basic living necessities and to protect their men from forced recruitment, abduction, detention and torture. Young women, including Sana'a University students, have been subjected to violent repression by Houthi armed groups, including by women thugs known as Al-Zaynabiyat. Some women have been beaten, electrocuted, arrested and released only on the condition that they refrain from engaging in activism. Others have had male family members detained on their behalf.

We have supported many women human rights defenders in providing their safe exit to neighbouring countries, assisting in filing for asylum and seeking resettlement in third countries. Unfortunately, none of those cases have resulted in resettlement. Although the Yemen refugee crisis does not in numbers amount to the Syrian one, it is still a problem affecting hundreds of thousands of Yemenis. Policies such as the European Union Dublin Regulation, the United States executive order to ban citizens from seven nations, including Yemen, from entering the United States, and the recent Saudi policies to deport Yemenis have all contributed to separating families.

On the situation in the south of the country, we echo the voices of the southern Yemeni women on the importance of reaching a just solution to the southern cause and realizing their right to self-determination. Today, after three decades of strife, southern grievances have still not been addressed. We have also seen the total exclusion of southerners and their cause from the current peace framework and negotiations, usually justified by the limitations of resolution 2216 (2015), which has been interpreted to limit negotiations to two sides.

We as women have the highest stake in peace. Members of the Women's Solidarity Network work relentlessly to end the bloody conflict over water and land resources, evacuate schools from armed groups and restore the rights of our sons and daughters to education, and we risk our lives on a daily basis to rescue families trapped in conflict zones. Many members of the Network play a leading role in alleviating the suffering of citizens by conducting relief projects and negotiating the opening of humanitarian corridors.

We are particularly proud to share the news that the Mothers of Abductees Association, which regularly demonstrates and calls for the release of its members' sons while enduring risks and abuse, was able to secure the release 336 detainees. That is compared to zero detainees released through the United Nations-sponsored process. Other members of the Women's Solidarity Network are actively working to stop the recruitment of children as combatants. They do so despite the limited means to help those children. Meanwhile, the United Nations has, since 2016, suspended its own disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes targeting children, citing security concerns and awaiting a political solution.

The comprehensive National Dialogue Conference, organized under the auspices of the United Nations and supported by the Council, was an important milestone in the country's history. Yemeni women participated effectively to produce a landmark framework and a charter for their rights and freedoms. That was later reflected in the draft constitution of 2015 and should remain fundamental in moving forward with any political resolution in Yemen.

Although women continue to play a leading role in peacebuilding, and despite presidential statement S/PRST/2017/7 of 2017, explicitly calling for the meaningful inclusion of women, women are still largely excluded from the peace negotiation process. We attribute that to the patriarchal philosophy of peace mediation, which rewards violence by granting space at the negotiation table only to holders of weapons, rather than the real peacemakers.

We welcome the recent efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen to support the engagement of women, starting with the expansion of his gender team and the establishment of the women's technical advisory group. However, we emphasize that women's engagement must not be restricted to an advisory role in the mediation efforts. Women must be meaningfully represented, present at the table and engaged in decision-making.

We join the many voices calling for a ceasefire and the resumption of the peace process. We affirm that there can be no just and sustainable peace without an inclusive process. As the Council moves forward in its discussions, resolutions or other actions, we strongly urge it to adopt the following recommendations.

On security measures, it should demand an immediate ceasefire, starting by ending the air bombardments led by the internationally recognized Government and its allies in the Arab coalition and pursue confidence-building measures towards restoring State institutions. It should call for the disarmament of all outlawed armed groups, demand the relocation of military camps and depots outside of cities and request the revival of the local security apparatus.

It should enforce a ban on the Houthis' use of landmines, urge them to submit a landmine map, request the commencement of demining operations and call for support for landmine victims. It must call for the prevention of the transfer and use of arms in Yemen. It should demand the lifting of the restrictions on ports and the normalization of air traffic in all governorates, allowing commercial aviation to operate. It should enforce a ban on child recruitment and request the immediate revival of the mobilization, disarmament and reintegration programmes for child combatants. It should call for the release of all arbitrarily detained and forcefully disappeared persons, particularly civilians, politicians, journalists, activists and members of the Baha'i minority, and demand an end to the issuance of the death penalty.

It should send peacekeepers to Yemen from neutral States that have not engaged in any way in the conflict in Yemen. It must call for immediate action to address the

logistical challenges preventing the peace negotiations from taking place, and urge a comprehensive and inclusive process that is guided by the implementation mechanism and the National Dialogue Conference. It should adopt all papers submitted during the National Dialogue Conference, including the final document and visions submitted by all groups to inform the framework for a political solution in Yemen. It must demand the establishment of an international fund for the reconstruction of Yemen in a transparent manner, to be co-financed by the Arab coalition countries and the international community. It should enact measures to support economic stability, reconstruction and the restoration of social services, while urging the establishment of anti-corruption mechanisms.

It must recognize the rights of southerners through a just solution that speaks to the demands of the southern people. It should demand a local ceasefire in Taiz governorate and support our five-point initiative to protect civilians in Al-Hudaydah. It must demand the initiation of resettlement programmes and asylum facilities to address the situation of Yemenis abroad. It should request a gender audit of ongoing relief operations, demand a solution for humanitarian diversion and reiterate the importance of integrating gender issues into the humanitarian response plans. It should demand the establishment of a mechanism to hold perpetrators accountable within a wider context of transitional justice and reparations, and impose individual targeted sanctions against warlords and those who obstruct the peace process. It should request that the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014) include gender expertise and gender-responsive reporting mechanisms.

On strengthening the engagement of women policymakers, the Council should recognize the priorities of women identified in the national agenda for women and peace and security, submitted in 2016, and call on the Government to report on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. It should refer explicitly to resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, as well as subsequent resolutions, clearly demand no less than 30 per cent participation by women in delegations and all related ceasefire and peace processes, and impose vacant seats if women are not included.

It should mandate an independent women's delegation at the peace negotiation table. It should urge the Special Envoy to ensure that women have equal representation in the peace consultations process and address the demands that we sent to him in our letter of March 2018. It should call for the establishment of a mechanism to hear the voices of rural women, as well as women victims and survivors of war, ensuring that their priorities are integrated into the negotiation process and the political solution. It should demand support for women peacemakers and urge the allocation of funding directly and flexibly to grass-roots women, activists and women's movements in order to support their efforts. It must call for the establishment of a clear mechanism to protect women and women human rights defenders and address their integrated protection needs, including their physical, psychological, digital and collective security.

We hope that those recommendations will be adopted and that they will make a significant contribution to ending the conflict in Yemen. The lack of action on those recommendations is a moral failure that contributes to the continued suffering of more than 27 million Yemenis.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ms. Jarhum for her briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

**Ms. Pierce** (United Kingdom): I thank our four briefers very much. I do not think that I have ever heard a more powerful set of briefings and pleas in the Security Council than those we heard from today. I think that their words and requests will reverberate around the Council. So far, the Council has been very united in its support of the United Nations work in Yemen, and we expect that to continue. I think, as well, that there is obviously a very clear joint partnership among the three United Nations Heads, which is also very important. If there is any light to be found in this awful crisis, it lies in their willingness to speak out and work really closely with one another. Their dedication and that of their teams and civil society to help the people of Yemen must be one of the things that the members of the Council have at the forefront of their minds.

As they described, it is a truly appalling situation on the ground. The severity of the humanitarian catastrophe cannot be overstated. Regardless of the hard work that is needed to redouble efforts in response to the humanitarian need — and we take into account everything that was just said about the commercial needs in order to keep Yemen functioning — it is also

clear that we, and they, will not succeed without an equal effort and commitment on the political track. It bears repeating once again that only a political solution will actually bring this dreadful conflict to an end. We heard about some small positive steps from Martin Griffiths today, in particular concerning the Central Bank and the exchange of prisoners. We heard some good news concerning the United Nations conference next year. I think that that is very important. But we have to bear in mind the very sobering descriptions that David Beasley gave us of what life is like for ordinary people, including children.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that we very much agree with what the Special Envoy said about bringing the parties together without preconditions. We need the words that we heard to be translated into concrete action. We need the parties to engage with the Special Envoy to take part in the consultations that Martin is setting up and engage constructively so that ultimately he can pave the way forward towards the resumption of formal negotiations. What the Special Envoy said about bringing his framework back to the Council is very welcome and important. I am sure that all members of the Council will want to express their support for all three of his strands of work for the United Nations, in particular for the political track. It is obviously vital that talks are inclusive and women are properly included. The women's technical advisory service is a very good step in that direction. It is good that he is searching for modern ways to put that into practice. The messages from Rasha Jarhum have been incredibly important today, and I thank her for taking the time to come and explain to the Council how it looks from the perspective of the citizens of Yemen.

My Foreign Secretary was in the region earlier this week because, like Martin and everyone else here, we believe that there is a window of opportunity to tackle this man-made crisis in Yemen. I want to emphasize the "man-made" aspect by saying that men can resolve what they have created. I therefore believe that that is another reason for all possible efforts to be put into the political track. David Beasley exhorted us to act now. I do not think that there is anyone who can have failed to have been moved by what David and Rasha told us. Jeremy Hunt, my Foreign Secretary, has announced that we will work with Security Council partners. Mark Lowcock provided us with a very important state of play with regard to his five asks. Speaking for the United Kingdom, we support all of them. Secretary Hunt has therefore asked me to say that, as penholder, we will provide the text of a draft resolution to partners on the Security Council on Monday, with the intention of including Mark's five asks, which all members have endorsed. I think that it is a very important point, to include all of Mark's five asks into practice.

**Mr. Alotaibi** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme; and Ms. Rasha Jarhum, Founder and Director of the Peace Track Initiative in Yemen, for their briefings on the recent developments in Yemen.

In my statement I will underscore two key issues: developments in the political and security situation and developments in the humanitarian and economic situation.

With regard to the political and security developments, we listened carefully to the briefing by Mr. Griffiths, who spoke of positive indicators towards the revitalization of the political track to address the Yemeni crisis. He said that perhaps an agreement will soon be reached between the Government and the Houthis to release prisoners and detainees, a step which we welcome. It would be an important step for confidence-building among the Yemeni parties. In that regard, we welcome the announcement about the upcoming resumption of political consultations in Stockholm. We thank the Kingdom of Sweden for hosting those consultations. At the same time, we hope that all Yemeni parties will commit to participating in good faith and without any preconditions in that round of consultations to allay fears of a repetition of the consultations in Geneva last September. The Security Council and the international community, in particular the coalition States, all supported Geneva consultations, and those States ceased their military operations at that time to facilitate the unhindered participation of Houthis. Unfortunately, the Houthis failed to participate in the consultations, which left negative consequences and deepened the catastrophic crisis at the humanitarian, economic and political levels.

The announcement of the upcoming round of consultations to be held in Stockholm resulted from the interest of the coalition States in supporting the political process with a view to ensuring Yemen's

security, stability, unity and sovereignty. That comes despite major security challenges confronting certain coalition States by the Houthis, such as threats to security and safety of the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which has been struck by 206 ballistic missiles and more than 68,000 other projectiles, resulting in the deaths of 112 persons and hundreds of wounded among the civilian population.

Concerning the latest military operations in Al-Hudaydah, I recall resolution 2216 (2015), which in paragraph 1 calls on the Houthis to withdraw from cities under their control and refrain from any actions that are the prerogatives of the legitimate Government. We hope that the upcoming round of consultations will lead to a political solution based on the three previously agreed terms of reference, so as to end the crisis and restore security and stability in Yemen.

With regard to the humanitarian and economic developments, we are deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation in Yemen, as Mr. Lowcock and Mr. Beasley briefed us, warning of food insecurity soon, while 14 million of the brotherly Yemeni people would be at risk of that threat. The reason is the failure to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions and the persistent armed conflict, which has created a war-time economy, marked by the inability to disburse citizens' salaries and deterioration in the buying power of the national currency as a result of the unprecedented collapse of the rate of exchange of Yemeni rial against foreign currencies. The international community must therefore shoulder a major responsibility to provide the Yemeni Government with the needed assistance in order to ensure the success of its policy to prevent a further deterioration of the national currency and be able to continue to pay salaries across Yemen.

In that connection, we commend the significant and continuing role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which on several occasions has disbursed considerable amounts of money to the Central Bank of Yemen, totalling approximately $3.2 billion. In addition, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Government of the United Arab Emirates, in coordination with UNICEF, have also made $75 million available to support the payment of salaries for more than 135,000 teachers across Yemen.

That economic assistance has made significant improvement in the exchange rate of the Yemeni rial against foreign currencies. Despite the constructive role of the Yemeni Government in that regard, and given the growing challenges, it has responded to the appeals by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs by suspending the implementation of its Decree 75 of 2018 owing to its potential to hinder imports. The Government has also confirmed its willingness to continue to cooperate with United Nations agencies and bodies.

The brotherly Yemeni people continue to bear humanitarian suffering despite the great financial and in-kind contributions from the international community, which most recently included the holding of a donor conference in Geneva in April. Kuwait donated $250 million at the conference for United Nations field agencies and international organizations working in Yemen. That was in addition to the flexible and cooperative role of the joint leadership of the coalition States, which issued more than 67,000 permits to ensure aid delivery throughout Yemen. The international community explains that the reason for the continued humanitarian suffering in Yemen is rooted in the deliberate attempts to block, seize and loot such assistance. We welcome the Secretary-General's determination, as stated by Mr. Lowcock in his briefing, to convene a conference in February 2019 in order to support the humanitarian situation in Yemen. Kuwait looks forward to participating in that conference.

In conclusion, the State of Kuwait reiterates its belief that there can only be a political solution to the crisis in Yemen. We are keen to support the political operation that will put an end to the suffering of our brotherly Yemeni people. Kuwait has expressed its readiness to provide logistical support to ensure the participation of all in the round of consultations to be held in Stockholm. We will also continue to support the efforts of Special Envoy Griffiths and all other efforts based on the three political terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2216 (2015). That would ensure Yemen's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and non-interference in its internal affairs.

**Mr. Delattre** (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, as well as Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for their briefings, which provide us with

a very clear framework for analysis and action. I also thank Mr. Beasley and Ms. Jarhum for their important briefings on the situation in Yemen, which is more worrisome than ever.

France believes that, when confronted with the increasingly devastating humanitarian tragedy in Yemen, we have the collective responsibility, and now an opportunity, to put an end to the war and pave the way for a political solution. Despite the scope of the problems, there is a window of opportunity today that the Security Council must take advantage of by doing all it can to support the necessary cessation of hostilities and the Special Envoy's mediation efforts. In that connection, I would like to turn to the situation in Al-Hudaydah, which is the tipping point for the situation in Yemen, and touch upon the constant deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

Recent clashes and bombardments, which have claimed the lives of many people, are endangering civilians, especially women and children, as well as endangering civilian infrastructure and blocking aid delivery routes. The ongoing daily deterioration of the humanitarian situation is pushing us ever closer to total disaster, while the latest estimates point to widespread famine, a large-scale cholera epidemic and the possibility that several generations of Yemenis will be completely deprived of an education. In that respect, military pauses are a means of reducing the intensity of clashes and fostering a positive climate for the resumption of political discussions, but it is clear that we must go further.

My second point is that it is more important than ever to respond to Mr. Lowcock's five specific asks. That must be our top priority. The Council must call for a lasting cessation of hostilities as soon as possible and ensure respect for international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, especially if it is critical to the country's economy. The access and delivery of humanitarian aid and imports, including between Sana'a and Al-Hudaydah, as well as the stabilization and recovery of the Yemeni economy, are essential, as was so eloquently voiced earlier.

Humanitarian and medical personnel who operate in a high-risk environment must not only be protected, but must be able to plan their operations and implement them safely. I would like to reiterate our full support for the efforts of humanitarian actors, who work in particularly difficult conditions. We also commend the work of the United Nations and all the teams involved to develop a single road map on the humanitarian dimension in relation to the World Bank, the humanitarian response plan and the new Famine Early Warning Systems Network, which must be adequately financed, as Mr. Lowcock indicated. Finally, I would like to reiterate France's full support for Special Envoy Griffiths. I thank him for his tireless efforts to resume negotiations in order to reach an inclusive and lasting political solution. France resolutely stands with Mr. Griffiths.

We believe, again, that there is now a real window of opportunity to relaunch a credible political process — the only solution to the crisis in Yemen. The humanitarian tragedy looming over the country must compel us to act. As the Special Envoy indicated, several obstacles have been removed, such as the sensitive issue of the evacuation of wounded Houthis, which is an important step towards ensuring that the Houthis are present at the negotiating table. We therefore encourage the Special Envoy to continue discussions with all parties with a view to making further progress on confidence-building measures. The momentum must be maintained. We are ready to collaborate on a draft resolution to respond to the humanitarian emergency by fully endorsing Mr. Lowcock's five asks and supporting the efforts of Mr. Griffiths to reach a sustainable, comprehensive and inclusive agreement. In that connection, as Ms. Jarhum noted, women's participation in resolving the Yemeni crisis is essential.

We therefore call on the parties to engage with the Special Envoy immediately, without conditions and in good faith. We call on all those involved to facilitate that work, and we welcome the recent announcements of support for the United Nations process made by stakeholders in the region. The quest for a solution is becoming more urgent every day. For millions of Yemenis, it is now a very real question of life or death. France will remain fully committed in that regard.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Mr. Mark Lowcock, Mr. David Beasley and Ms. Rasha Jarhum for their briefings.

We first want to note the reduction of violence around the Yemeni port of Al-Hudaydah. We believe it is essential to work to establish a full, countrywide cessation of hostilities, which is important not only to ensure the reliable delivery of humanitarian and

commercial goods to the northern areas of Yemen where the majority of the country's population lives, but also to achieve the successful implementation of the Special Envoy's plans to hold a round of negotiations in Sweden. We welcome the progress that Mr. Griffiths has made in getting the parties to resume a dialogue and show flexibility on confidence-building measures, including the exchange of prisoners and other steps. We hope the planned talks will be substantive and help to make the political process sustainable. We do not expect the disagreements to end quickly. Years of confrontation have created a gulf that will not be easy to bridge. We will continue to assist Mr. Griffiths through bilateral channels, in our capacity as a permanent member of the Security Council and also a member of the group of 19 States supporting international efforts for a settlement in Yemen.

Our position remains the same. We continue to call for a plan for a negotiated solution to the conflict in Yemen. The parties must show restraint and refrain from resorting to force. The history of the Yemeni conflict shows that the military efforts are not working. Every day of war cranks up the cost of Yemen's post-conflict reconstruction. We condemn the indiscriminate strikes on civilian targets and ballistic-missile attacks on Yemen's neighbours. We support ensuring unconditional compliance with the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law and unfettered humanitarian access to all parts of the country. The humanitarian situation in Yemen remains critical. A majority of the population is in need of assistance of one sort or another. Millions of Yemenis are starving and have no way of obtaining the medical services and medicines they need. We must make humanitarian assistance to Yemen a priority in our joint work and it must be provided on a non-discriminatory basis, regardless of who controls the territories where Yemenis live.

The international community is actively assisting the people of Yemen. While Russia is contributing to that effort, like many other Member States, we realize that it is impossible to improve the situation in Yemen through humanitarian measures alone. The solution must be a political one. We now need to unite around the Special Envoy and help him work proactively with all of the actors involved in the Yemeni conflict. The war is only playing into the hands of the various terrorists who have been taking advantage of the chaos to strengthen their positions in central and southern Yemen. The fight against terrorism is our shared task and we must take every possible measure to end its threat.

In conclusion, we want to express the hope that policies of confrontation, threats and pressure through sanctions will give way to collective efforts to create regional dialogue mechanisms, as well as a comprehensive and indivisible security architecture in the Middle East, both for the Arab States of the Persian Gulf and their neighbours. Russia's vision in that regard remains relevant and much needed.

**Mr. Ipo** (Cote d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks Mr. Martin Griffiths, Mr. Mark Lowcock, Mr. David Beasley and Ms. Rasha Jarum for their informative briefings on the latest developments in the political and humanitarian situations in Yemen.

After four years of fighting in Yemen, the civilian population is now facing a true humanitarian tragedy. Millions of Yemenis are living under the threat of food insecurity and are prey to famine and malnutrition, while civilians with no access to safe drinking water and basic or emergency health care are dealing with waterborne diseases and the risk of epidemics. In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its deep concern about the intensified fighting, as a result of which the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. We welcome and encourage the efforts of United Nations bodies and agencies to bring an end to the deadly clashes and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and emergency relief.

In view of this deplorable and disturbing situation, we reaffirm our support for all the international community's initiatives to resolve the crisis in Yemen. In that regard, we call on all the parties to the conflict to participate in the consultations soon to be held in Stockholm, led by Special Envoy Griffiths, to whom we affirm our full support. In that regard, my country calls on the opposing parties to observe the ceasefire in the port city of Al-Hudaydah, the epicentre of the crisis, to allow both for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and for giving peace a chance. We also urge all the Yemeni parties to fully engage in frank negotiations and make the compromises needed to achieve a lasting settlement to the crisis within the framework of the parameters established by the Security Council.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire calls for united action by the Council with a view to reaching a peaceful and

definitive settlement to the conflict as soon as possible and in the interests of the people.

**Mr. Skoog** (Sweden): I thank all of our briefers. I really want to echo the point made by my United Kingdom colleague about what a powerful message they have passed on to us again today. I thank them and their colleagues on the ground for all the work they are doing — and that includes Ms. Rasha Jarum — to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people and bring an end to that war.

During the most recent Council meeting on Yemen on 23 October (see S/PV.8379), Mr. Lowcock warned that 14 million people — half of the Yemeni population — could risk famine if the military escalation and economic crisis continued. Should we reach that point, he added, most of the innocent civilians losing their lives would be women and children. Since then, and despite those warnings, the situation has deteriorated further, as we have just heard. The armed conflict has intensified, with dramatic increases in air strikes, shelling, attacks and fighting in residential areas. I want to express our huge appreciation for the work of all the humanitarian agencies that are operating under those terribly difficult circumstances. With civilians getting caught in the crossfire and civilian infrastructure coming under attack, there have been scores of civilian casualties. Hundreds of thousands of Yemen's most vulnerable citizens are now trapped in active conflict zones, and in Al-Hudaydah more than half of them are children. There have also been further disruptions to the life-saving distribution network of humanitarian and commercial goods.

To the extent that there is a certain lull in the attacks, it must be sustained. A continued offensive would only prolong the suffering of the Yemeni people and move us further from a negotiated political settlement. As we have heard, we have a window of opportunity right now, and our focus must be on ending the fighting and getting the parties to the table. Political consultations, led by the Special Envoy, represent our best chance of reaching a turning point in the conflict, moving towards a political solution and alleviating the suffering. We must focus on that joint objective immediately.

Today, our briefers from the United Nations have again put the ongoing tragedy on our desks, as well as presenting us with the immediate steps needed to save lives, improve the humanitarian situation and create the conditions necessary for a political solution. As stated before, we fully support the five interventions outlined by Mark Lowcock and their individual and collective endorsement. We look forward to working with everyone to translate that commitment into a Security Council resolution and we stand ready in that regard. We believe that there is strong unity in the Council around such requests. We now need to rally behind the following.

The first step is a cessation of hostilities around infrastructure and facilities for humanitarian aid and commercial imports. All parties have the responsibility to protect civilians and civilian objects and to take all feasible steps to prevent and minimize harm, particularly to schools, medical care and humanitarian personnel.

Secondly, the parties must be called upon to engage in good faith with the political consultations brought about by Martin Griffiths. It will be important to ensure the representation and effective participation of women in that process from the start for all the reasons mentioned by Ms. Jarhum today.

Thirdly, it is important to ensure humanitarian and commercial access. Yemen's ports and roads must be kept open and safe. All parties are obliged to respect international humanitarian law and to ensure humanitarian access.

Fourthly, it is necessary to pursue confidence-building measures, including those relating to Sana'a airport, the Central Bank of Yemen and other economic measures, as well as prisoners. Mr. Griffiths also has our strong support in all that he is doing in that regard.

The futile war in Yemen has been going on for far too long, leading to immense suffering and thousands dead. The recent developments provide a window of opportunity that must now be seized. A united and active Security Council can make a difference. Our focus should be on supporting the United Nations efforts to immediately address the dire humanitarian situation and on ensuring that the political consultations get off to a good start.

**Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the convening of this meeting and the important briefings by Martin Griffiths, Mark Lowcock, David Beasley and Rasha Jarhum, who, from different perspectives, have agreed in describing a distressing situation that needs the urgent support of

the international community and the rapid action of the Security Council.

Peru notes with deep concern the destructive cycle that has taken root in Yemen, where spiralling violence such as that seen in recent weeks is followed by brief periods of tense calm, while the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today and regional instability continue to worsen. Approximately 22 million people, three of every four Yemenis, require humanitarian assistance. The extreme vulnerability of the population, exacerbated by the collapse of public services and the economy, is claiming more lives than military action and creating conditions conducive to violent extremism that leads to terrorism.

As was pointed out to us, the situation is particularly fragile in Al-Hudaydah, which, even before the most recent escalation, saw the worst conditions in terms of food and health care, including 100,000 cases of girls and boys under 5 years of age with severe acute malnutrition. Many of the 300,000 civilians left in the city live in the worst conditions, unable to pay the cost of transport to flee the fighting. The bombings in recent weeks have continued to cause fatalities, including children, and to destroy the health infrastructure.

We deplore the evil pursuit of the conflict and the repeated violations of international humanitarian law that have been committed by all parties, while the Security Council has failed to fully assume its responsibility to protect the civilian population by imposing a humanitarian ceasefire and ensuring due accountability.

We wish to express our full support for every humanitarian worker of the United Nations and the other agencies deployed in Yemen and to once again emphasize the moral and legal duty to allow their full access to those in need. At the same time, we must point out that that will be possible only as we make progress on the political track.

The looming widespread famine and the exponential increase in cases of cholera and other diseases show the urgent need to acknowledge with deeds and actions, not only with words, that there is no military solution to the conflict, as well as the necessity for consistency in prioritizing the protection of civilians.

That requires the Yemeni parties committing to participating without preconditions and in good faith in inclusive negotiations sponsored by the United Nations. We therefore welcome the fact that the members of the coalition and other actors involved in the conflict have decided to support that course of action with the meeting to be held in Sweden in the coming days.

We also emphasize that the members of the Council are united in supporting a political solution and in believing that that is possible. That should spur us to express our full support to Mr. Griffiths, emphasizing the need to act rapidly, pragmatically and fairly.

We also emphasize the urgent need for the Council and the parties to the conflict to meet Mr. Lowcock's five requests, including implementing an immediate cessation of all hostilities, and to ensure full access for the humanitarian assistance and commercial goods needed by the population.

We wish to highlight the important steps taken recently by countries with influence over the parties aimed at building the necessary trust to bring the parties closer together and take the conflict back to the negotiating table as soon as possible. We particularly welcome the confidence-building measures that the Special Envoy has been supporting, such as the transfer of the wounded and the exchange of prisoners.

I conclude by reaffirming Peru's commitment to achieving a sustainable peace in Yemen and our full support for the swift adoption of a resolution by the Council that would help to put an end to one of the worst humanitarian tragedies created not by nature but by the violence and callousness of humankind itself.

**Ms. Wronecka** (Poland): I would like to begin by thanking all the briefers for their valuable contributions to our discussion today. My particular thanks go to Mr. Griffiths for his continued efforts to relaunch the political process in Yemen. Poland holds in the highest regard his engagement with the parties to the conflict, the relevant stakeholders and civil society in order to pave the way for a political dialogue in Yemen.

As Yemen is on the brink of the worst famine in 100 years and military operations are escalating despite the looming humanitarian catastrophe, we now find ourselves on the verge of a disaster. The conflict cannot continue any longer. Thinking that it can be solved by military means and by the use of force is a delusion. Instead, what is urgently needed to avert the human-caused catastrophe is diplomacy, mediation, the engagement of all the relevant parties and regional countries and the meaningful support of

the international community, including the Security Council. We can no longer limit ourselves to meetings in the Chamber and discussions of the disastrous situation in Yemen without taking concrete actions. Words will not save the lives of the Yemeni children who die from hunger and disease on a daily basis.

History shows that where there is a will, there is a way. We therefore strongly urge all parties to the conflict to show goodwill, flexibility and readiness to compromise and to engage with the Special Envoy without preconditions. We call on all relevant stakeholders to make progress on confidence-building measures and to participate in the next round of consultations under the auspices of the United Nations. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our full support for Mr. Griffiths, in particular his vision for the political consultations. We also express our appreciation for the diplomatic efforts undertaken by the members of the Council aimed at creating conditions conducive to peace consultations. We are also ready to engage constructively in negotiations on the draft resolution proposed by the United Kingdom.

The catastrophic humanitarian situation in Yemen, as thoroughly described by Under-Secretary-General Lowcock, and the continuing deterioration of security conditions in the country require decisive and unified action by the Council. Therefore, we express our full support for the five points raised by Mr. Lowcock during the briefing on 23 October (see S/PV.8379) and urge their swift implementation.

We particularly call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, especially in and around the infrastructure and facilities on which humanitarian operations and commercial deliveries rely. We remain gravely alarmed by the recent escalation of fighting in the city of Al-Hudaydah. We urge both the Houthis and the coalition to immediately de-escalate and cease all military activities in the whole governorate. I would like to stress once again that Al-Hudaydah constitutes a critical supply chain for humanitarian and commercial deliveries. Any disruption of that vital lifeline will contribute significantly to the spread of famine, thereby putting the lives of millions of Yemenis in jeopardy. We condemn in the strongest terms all actions that impede the delivery of humanitarian aid to Yemen, as well as the transfer, storage and distribution of life-saving supplies.

Moreover, I would like to stress the imperative for the following actions to be immediately taken by all the parties to the conflict: guaranteeing unimpeded access and movement for vital imports into and across the whole country, ensuring the full and sustained functioning of all Yemen's ports and the Sana'a airport, respecting the principles of international humanitarian law and the ensuring of the protection of civilians, respecting the principles of proportionality and distinction, and, finally, ensuring the inclusion and involvement in the peace process of all relevant groups of Yemeni society, including meaningful participation by women in peace consultations.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that all the parties to the conflict in Yemen and regional actors have reiterated their commitment to finding a political solution to the conflict and their readiness to return to the negotiating table. The time has come to live up to those declarations.

**Mr. Cohen** (United States of America): I especially thank today's briefers for their exceptionally sobering, compelling and powerful presentations. As always, we are grateful for the hard work that they and their teams do on the ground every day in Yemen.

While these briefings add devastating clarity to our view of the crisis, they also reinforce the central lesson from over four years of conflict: the only enduring solution to this man-made — yes, man-made — crisis is a political settlement. This war must end soon, and it will not end on the battlefield. As United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has made clear, the United States seeks a cessation of hostilities in Yemen.

With that lesson in mind, the United States renews its call on parties to the conflict to engage with Special Envoy Griffiths as soon as possible, and its call on all Member States to assist. We are fully supportive of the Special Envoy's work to bring the parties to the table for consultations to discuss a framework for a political settlement to this war. The parties need to stop debating conditions for talks, and instead sit down at the table and engage on the Special Envoy's reasonable proposals. We furthermore welcome the Special Envoy's offer to share the framework with the Council when appropriate.

We also welcome reports of progress towards allowing select wounded Houthis to travel to Oman for medical care. We expect that the coalition and Oman will do everything they can to support that arrangement.

Special Envoy Martin Griffiths has worked for months to build an environment conducive for the consultations to begin. The Houthis must reciprocate immediately, without additional preconditions, and agree to participate in political consultations with the coalition in Sweden as soon as possible.

As political talks take place, the parties must ensure that the flow of assistance and commercial goods remains unimpeded. Fighting around Al-Hudaydah has shown us the immense risk of escalation. It is irresponsible for the Houthis to place their fighters on the rooftops of hospitals, warehouses and other civilian infrastructure. Thousands of civilians are threatened by the fighting, and it is getting harder and harder to move supplies from the port to the Yemenis who need it.

It is particularly important that the parties take no steps that could make this precarious situation worse. The Houthis need to lift the wide range of bureaucratic obstacles that make deliveries of assistance difficult and stop interfering with United Nations relief efforts. Both sides of the conflict must help facilitate the movement of aid workers and journalists. The mistreatment of Baha'i and adherents of other religions must stop.

We also call on the Yemeni Government to work with its partners to stabilize the Yemeni rial and re-build the capacity of the Central Bank. It is critical that the Government avoid taking any steps, even inadvertently, that could make it harder for importers to get food and fuel into the country.

There can be no more excuses for delaying work on a settlement. We know that for the millions of Yemenis facing the risk of starvation and disease there is no substitute for immediate humanitarian relief. We commend the tireless efforts, in dangerous circumstances, by David Beasley, the World Food Programme and its implementing partners and Lise Grande and her team on the ground.

The United States will continue its leadership in supporting critical aid and efforts to address the economic crisis. We urge all Member States to join us in that work. It is work that must happen regardless of the state of the conflict. In the same vein, we remind all parties to the conflict of their obligations under the law of armed conflict, including the obligation to take all feasible precautions to minimize the risk of harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure.

The Security Council remains deeply divided on many issues, but as we are hearing today, not so on Yemen. All of us around this table have emphasized a common theme: that the time for progress on the political track is now, that we stand behind Special Envoy Griffiths and his efforts and that we are united in our demand for Mr. Lowcock's five asks, including for unfettered humanitarian access and for a cessation of hostilities. The United States and the members of the Council will be watching the situation closely in the weeks to come, particularly whether the parties cooperate with the Special Envoy's work. We must all use our collective and individual influence to make sure that they do.

**Mr. Amde** (Ethiopia): We thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock, Executive Director David Beasley and Ms. Rasha Jarhum for their respective briefings, which highlighted how the humanitarian crisis and the fighting in Yemen remain a source of grave concern. We are indeed moved by their powerful speeches. Those of us who have experienced hunger of biblical proportions in the past heard them loud and clear. The four of them told us the facts on the ground. They spoke sincerely and allowed us to rediscover for ourselves how weak and vulnerable we are of our own making as humans. We believe it is high time to find a durable political solution that could sustainably address the daily suffering of millions of Yemenis.

While there was a marked increase in clashes at the beginning of this month, particularly in Al-Hudaydah city, causing civilian deaths and injuries and displacement, as well as the destruction of civilian facilities, we note that the intensity of the violence has now been reduced. Reports indicate that the coalition has halted its military operations in Al-Hudaydah. We hope that will lead to a sustained ceasefire.

The increasing number of voices calling for ending the war in Yemen lately is something that needs to be welcomed. As the Secretary-General stressed in his statement on 2 November,

> "on the political side, there are signs of hope. We must do all we can to maximize the chances for success."

We concur with the Secretary-General that the international community should act together to stop the violence and prevent an imminent humanitarian catastrophe.

We believe that that can be done by fully supporting the continued diplomatic endeavours of Special Envoy Griffiths. We appreciate that the Special Envoy has continued to make preparations for the upcoming round of consultations to revive the political talks. We also welcome the readiness of the parties to engage with him. In that regard, we underscore that the continued and sustained de-escalation of violence and restraint would be absolutely vital in order to create an enabling environment for the political process. We also encourage the United Nations to re-engage the parties on a negotiated outcome on the Al-Hudaydah port, which should remain open and operational, as it is a lifeline for millions of Yemenis.

We call on all parties to resolve their differences at the United Nations-facilitated political process, which we believe is the only solution to address the legitimate aspirations of the people of Yemen and respond to the legitimate security concerns of countries in the region. The Council should also continue to provide its political backing to the Special Envoy. In that regard, the unity of the Council is imperative.

While it is time to seize this opportunity to relaunch the political process, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners should also be supported as they continue to operate in extremely difficult circumstances. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has pointed out that the humanitarian movement and access to warehouses and people in need have become more difficult or impossible in some cases. Therefore, safe, unhindered and sustained humanitarian access remains absolutely vital to enable them to provide the much-needed humanitarian assistance to all in need. The protection of civilians and civilian facilities is also critical. Protecting the supply of food and essential goods, addressing the economic difficulties, including the payment of civil servants, and increasing funding for humanitarian operations would also be critical to alleviate the humanitarian tragedy in Yemen.

In conclusion, for the sake of civilians, who have suffered enormously, it is time to accelerate coordinated efforts to revitalize the Yemeni-owned and Yemeni-led political process under the auspices of the United Nations, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2216 (2015). The upcoming peace talks in Sweden will provide an opportunity to make progress. The parties must be called upon to demonstrate the necessary political will and commitment to participating in the talks.

The Council should be able to speak with one voice in calling for an end to the war in Yemen and the need to address the humanitarian situation as a matter of urgency. We look forward to engaging constructively in the upcoming discussions on the proposed draft resolution by the United Kingdom.

**Mrs. Cordova Soria** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the briefing delivered by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths, whose presence we wish to take advantage of in expressing our full support for his tireless efforts to achieve a solution through dialogue to the conflict in Yemen. We are also grateful for the briefings delivered by Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme; and Ms. Rasha Jarhum.

The effect of the words of all the briefers cannot be called anything other than shame. The international community should be ashamed of the degree of suffering we have allowed, which continues in Yemen to this day. The historians of the future will be able to see the case of Yemen and will be able to study in this case everything that is wrong and failing in the economic, political, commercial and international relations mechanisms of the first decades of the twenty-first century. If we allow this country to continue on that course of destruction, suffering and death without taking effective and immediate action today, I believe that all of us will have many reasons to feel shame.

My delegation expresses its deep concern about the alarming escalation of violence in Yemen, especially the bombing and air strikes that have resulted from military campaigns in the city of Al-Hudaydah, which to date have generated more than 445,000 internally displaced persons. It is disturbing that, while by the end of 2017 the number of fatalities resulting from the conflict amounted to more than 10,000 people — according to official data published by the World Health Organization — at present, even without an official update, that number could have quintupled. Moreover, that statistic is dwarfed if we take into account the victims of diseases and hunger that this fully man-made humanitarian crisis is generating. On that point, it is worth reflecting on the technology and the origin of the weapons, missiles and bombs that are deployed in Yemen, which are being used in attacks against hospitals, markets, public spaces, buses full

of children and even wedding celebrations and are costing the lives of thousands of innocent civilians. If we want to talk about resolving the conflict in Yemen peaceably and through dialogue, then those transfers and sale of arms, missiles and bombs must stop. We appeal to the sense of humanity and responsibility of the international community in that regard.

We also regret that, as a result of clashes, access to the port of Al-Hudaydah has been compromised, while the planting of antipersonnel mines jeopardizes the integrity and safety of port workers as well as the humanitarian assistance that enters through the port. Due to this serious situation, several humanitarian aid agencies, including the World Food Program and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, can access neither the 51,000 metric tons of wheat that are stored in the Red Sea Mills nor to the warehouses where humanitarian assistance goods and articles are stored.

Also, according to a report by the United Nations Population Fund, the lives of more than 1,500 of the 10,000 pregnant women trapped in the middle of the clashes in the city of Al-Hudaydah could be put at risk if the only hospital in the city that can provide emergency care becomes inaccessible. We would refer to the Al-Thawra hospital, which was struck by the remains of a missile last week and which, despite the violence, continues to provide its services, including to 59 children, 25 of them in intensive care.

We remind the parties that any attack or military campaign that targets civilians, public spaces, homes or medical and educational centres, as well as the launching of missiles and the deployment of antipersonnel mines, run counter to international law and international humanitarian law. As such, those actions could constitute crimes against humanity that can be investigated and sanctioned by the corresponding international tribunals. On the other hand, we see with great concern that armed forces that are part of the coalition and have bases on Yemeni territory are repressing and causing fatalities among civilians who oppose their presence, as occurred in the Al-Mahrah governorate in recent days.

We reiterate that an attack or military campaign against the city and port of Al-Hudaydah would not only seriously affect the more than 22 million people currently in need of humanitarian assistance; it would also increase the number of such people to an unsustainable scale, thereby dangerously increasing the number of people at risk of famine from 8 to 13 million. We therefore call on the parties involved in the conflict to refrain from attacking or jeopardizing the security, integrity and operability of the port and the city of Al-Hudaydah, as well as restricting or preventing the deployment of humanitarian assistance. We also call on the Yemeni authorities to avoid restrictions or administrative obstacles affecting the entry of imports of essential foods such as wheat, rice, sugar and milk, among others. The military and military actions in Yemen only transgress and weaken the efforts that our Organization, and the Special Envoy in particular, has been making to establish a dialogue that brings the parties closer to achieve a negotiated solution to the conflict.

The Council must therefore emphatically reiterate to the parties that compliance with its resolutions, particularly resolution 2216 (2015), is mandatory. We therefore call on all of the actors and parties involved to end the violence immediately and engage in all the Special Envoy's initiatives to relaunch the dialogue to reach a political a solution that will satisfy the demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people, with respect for their sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. To that end, the commitment of the parties without preconditions is essential.

In conclusion, we reiterate our delegation's support for the consultations and dialogue process initiated by the Special Envoy as an important step to steer the political negotiation process towards a peaceful resolution of the situation in Yemen.

**Mrs. Mele Colifa** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation thanks Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme; and Ms. Rasha Jarhum, Founder and Director of the Peace Track Initiative Yemen, for their excellent, enlightening and poignant briefings.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is closely following the clashes that have characterized the power struggle in Yemen for years. Their persistence and development are worrisome to such a degree that they call for the increased attention of the members of the Security Council and the international community.

Despite all efforts carried out since its beginning, the situation of the civilian population has not seen any improvement in stability. Recently, Al-Thawra Hospital — the main health-care facility serving Al-Hudaydah — was shut down, and its patients fled owing to the proximity of the clashes related to the offensive of the Yemeni Government and its allies against the Houthi rebels. We are deeply concerned about the persistent and widespread insecurity encroaching upon the civilian population of the areas most affected by the conflict, who live in daily fear of being hit by a stray bullet and worried that members of their families will not return home after a day's work. In most cases marked by years-long deprivation, inability to pay for food, lack of health care and inability to attend school regularly, we would expect to see a people in the throes of desperation. Although they have been faced by that reality, we admire the fact that the people continue to do everything they can to draw on their energy and deal with the situation despite the fact that war and the fear of death continue to confront them daily.

My delegation calls on the parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law, while bearing in mind that, at the most recent Security Council meeting on this subject in October (see S/PV.8379), Mr. Lowcock spoke of the more than 5,000 recorded violations of international humanitarian law since late May — a significantly large number — including heavy civilian casualties and the destruction and damage to critical civilian infrastructure, such as hospitals, electricity and water systems, markets, roads and bridges, among others. During that same meeting, he mentioned delays in issuing visas, restrictions on the importation of equipment and cargo, retractions of permits, interference in humanitarian assessment exercises, interference in monitoring and other obstructions that limit the ability of humanitarian agencies to provide vital assistance to innocent civilians.

Given the situation, we are convinced that hostilities in proximity to all infrastructure and facilities on which providing assistance and commercial imports depend must cease. It is undeniable that a humanitarian ceasefire would reflect the obligations of the parties to the conflict to uphold international humanitarian law and to do everything possible to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance. My delegation acknowledges and is grateful for the efforts of the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme and other agencies to attenuate the threat of cholera and famine, including WHO's delivery of cholera vaccines to more than half a million Yemenis in October.

In conclusion, we support the mediation efforts of the Special Envoy Griffiths. We believe that his initiative to launch the negotiation process is important to our shared goal of bringing peace to Yemen — a proposal that we hope will enjoy the full approval of the opposing parties to the conflict. We ask the members of the Council to remain united and support Mr. Lowcock's requests here so that they can work to the benefit of the Yemeni people.

**Mr. Umarov** (Kazakhstan): My delegation joins others in expressing thanks to Special Envoy Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General Lowcock, Executive Director Beasley and social protection specialist Jarhum for their insightful, eloquent and informative updates. Kazakhstan is closely following the recent developments and would like to make three points today.

First, Kazakhstan expresses its grave concern about the humanitarian crisis, which has continued to worsen because of the recent military escalation and a severe and rapid economic crisis, bringing the country closer to the world's worst famine in more than a century, while endangering daily the lives of millions of people in Yemen. We were moved by the grave assessments of Mark Lowcock and David Beasley of the horrifying humanitarian situation in the country. Kazakhstan strongly supports the United Nations calls on all parties for a ceasefire, to safeguard civilian lives, prevent deaths and injuries, allow freedom of movement and protect hospitals, clinics and schools, in accordance with international humanitarian law and human rights law. In that regard, we back all of Mr. Lowcock's five points to be implemented in order to avert a humanitarian disaster.

Secondly, we urge all parties in Yemen to find compromises and reject unilateral decisions that could harm the peace process. The search for a peaceful resolution of the conflict should be intensified, and an urgent, universal ceasefire must be reached without preconditions. The prospects for talks to end Yemen's devastating war have become more real after Saudi Arabia recently confirmed its willingness to evacuate 50 wounded Houthi fighters, as a confidence-building measure. Kazakhstan calls on the Yemeni parties to seize this opportunity to de-escalate tensions and to participate fully, constructively and in good faith in

order to build confidence among them and take a step towards ending the conflict. In that regard, we were encouraged by the Special Envoy's announcement of the agreement reached by three parties to the conflict on the exchange of prisoners of war and detainees.

Thirdly, we believe that a revamped, regional approach is needed to uphold the ceasefire and promote the peace process. We commend the Special Envoy's attempts to involve different States of the Middle East and the Gulf region in that process. We welcome the recent productive meetings of the Special Envoy with the Government of Yemen and regional players, including the senior leaders of the Houthi Ansar Allah movement, which will help to reach the desired agreement. The support of neighbouring countries is critical and must be sought to work for a violence-free Yemen. While working on the political front, the international community should focus equally on mobilizing resources for alleviating the humanitarian crisis. Ultimately, the negative impact of the economic crisis must be overcome with greater financial aid and investments in development to help Yemen reach stability.

Finally, Kazakhstan expresses its unconditional support for the Special Envoy's efforts and urges parties to engage in good faith and without preconditions in the political process. We agree with Rasha Jarhum that the involvement of women and civil society is important, and their recommendations should be taken into consideration. We also call upon the parties to the conflict to demonstrate flexibility in order to avoid disagreements and properly resolve complex issues. We believe that a negotiated, United Nations-facilitated political settlement, through inclusive intra-Yemeni dialogue, is the only solution, and that all measures must proceed in that direction. Kazakhstan is ready to work on the text of a relevant draft resolution to help resolve the Yemeni conflict.

**Mr. Van Oosterom** (Netherlands): We thank Martin Griffiths, Mark Lowcock, David Beasley and Rasha Jarhum for their impressive and convincing briefings. They presented us with a grave description of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Their strong words underline the urgency of the Security Council's action and decision-making. They made it clear that we need a peaceful, sustainable political solution. In that context, I will focus on three issues — first, conflict and hunger; secondly, the responsibility of the international community; and, thirdly, the urgent need for a political solution.

On my first point, there is a vicious cycle of conflict and hunger in armed conflicts around the world. In May (see S/PV.8267), the Council unanimously adopted a resolution we facilitated (resolution 2417 (2018)) that called on all of us to break that cycle. In that context, the end of extreme hunger in Yemen ultimately depends on our collective political will.

The situation in Yemen is compounded by interference with United Nations depots, continued air strikes and indiscriminate shelling. Those attacks have led to damage to critical civilian infrastructure and to water, sanitation and health facilities, as Mr. Lowcock just described. In general, depriving civilians of objects indispensable to their survival — indeed, starving civilians intentionally as a method of warfare — is under no circumstance permissible; it may even constitute a war crime.

We took note of Mr. Lowcock's remarks about the current lull in the fighting around Al-Hudaydah, which must become permanent. The year-long partial blockade is already creating essential shortages. In the event of renewed escalation, the port of Al-Hudaydah might become inaccessible to any ship carrying commodities that are vital to a population in need. The port is an essential lifeline for millions of Yemeni people. On many occasions, we have also expressed our concern over Houthi missiles targeting civilians in Saudi Arabia. Those missiles attacks should stop.

That brings me to my second point — the responsibility of the international community. Secretary-General Guterres has said it very clearly: it is time to act. The international community must do its utmost to protect civilians in times of conflict. The most effective way to do so is for the Council to fully support the five requests from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Let me reiterate them and express how we see them.

First, as an initial step towards the full cessation of hostilities, a humanitarian cease-fire is the only way to prevent mass starvation. Secondly, in order to protect the supply of food and essential goods across the country, all routes need to be opened for those goods. Thirdly, we need a larger and faster injection of foreign exchange into the economy through the Central Bank. We welcome the recent injection, as Special Envoy Griffiths just described. Fourthly, the humanitarian

operation needs increased funding. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is doing its share in that regard. And, fifthly, there must be full engagement with the Special Envoy to end the conflict. The Council should support those five asks. We therefore welcome the announcement just made by the United Kingdom that it will circulate a draft resolution on Monday endorsing those five asks.

It is the Council's responsibility to take a firm stance against the persistent violations of international humanitarian law, like the ones we see on a daily basis in Yemen. We need to stand up for the brave humanitarian personnel; they should never be the target of attacks. Humanitarian access must not be politicized by the parties to the conflict. And all parties should make it possible for the United Nations to collect objective data in order to draw up reliable needs assessments based on the real needs of the people.

The international community should continue to raise its voice against impunity. Perpetrators must, and will, be held accountable, not only to provide justice for victims in the future but also to deter offences in the present. In that context, we are grateful for the ongoing work of the Human Rights Council's Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen and of the sanctions committee Panel of Experts on Yemen.

My third and final point is the need for a political solution. To respond to OCHA's fifth ask, I can say that both the European Union and the Netherlands fully support the tireless efforts of Mr. Griffiths to achieve a sustainable political solution. As others have said, all parties should participate in the talks in Sweden without preconditions. And they should work with Mr. Griffiths in good faith and in a constructive manner. The countries with influence over the parties to the conflict should use their position to ensure successful talks. The talks must be inclusive and should also address local grievances in Yemen. We commend Sweden for its willingness to host the talks, we thank Kuwait for its offer of logistical support and we thank Oman for its constructive role.

We thank Ms. Jarhum for her briefing, which underlined both the conflict's effect on women and the determination of women to contribute in a meaningful way to peace and a better Yemen. Resolution 1325 (2000) can guide us in that regard. First of all, the horrible violence against women and girls, as described by Ms. Jarhum, must stop, but that is not enough. We call on the parties to include women in their delegations. We are pleased that Mr. Griffiths has already attended meetings with a number of women representatives. The fact that the men are the ones fighting does not mean that only the men must make peace. We need the proud women of Yemen to be fully involved in the peace process. They know what is needed for all of the people of Yemen.

In conclusion, we are extremely concerned about the millions of Yemeni people on the brink of starvation. We call on all parties to work together to make humanitarian access possible and to bring about a humanitarian ceasefire now so that people in need can be reached. It is urgent that the Council support OCHA's five asks. Following the advice of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen, we also call upon the international community, including the countries of the League of Arab States, to stop delivering arms to this theatre of war and its main combatants. We must now focus on immediately addressing the famine and finding a peaceful and sustainable political solution to this terrible conflict. The Council should fully support the efforts of Mr. Lowcock and Mr. Griffiths. That is what the people of Yemen need from the Council.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

At the outset, I would like to thank Special Envoy Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General Lowcock and Executive Director Beasley for their comprehensive, timely and convincing briefings. I highly appreciate their unrelenting efforts to restore peace and stability and improve the humanitarian situation in Yemen. I also wish to thank Ms. Rasha Jarhum for her briefing.

At present, the political security and humanitarian situation remains grave in Yemen. The recent escalation in the armed conflict in the country has not only led to civilian casualties, but also destroyed roads, hospitals and other infrastructure. Moreover, it has hampered humanitarian assistance and further increased the risk of famine and the spread of cholera. We are truly saddened by the suffering of the Yemeni people, and we express our concern about the situation in Yemen.

Yemen's problems can be resolved only politically. Military means cannot achieve lasting peace. The international community should safeguard Yemen's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity, support the mediation efforts of the United

Nations and arrive at an inclusive solution through dialogue and negotiation, based on resolution 2216 (2015), the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, and the outcome documents of Yemen's National Dialogue Conference.

We welcome the recent efforts of the international community and Special Envoy Griffiths to advance the peace process in Yemen. Thanks to the joint efforts of the Special Envoy and the relevant parties, progress has been made on such issues as the release of prisoners and the evacuation of the injured, thereby creating conditions for dialogue. The Special Envoy has conducted intensive shuttle diplomacy. Closely engaged with the relevant parties on this matter, he has encouraged them to meet each other halfway and to return to the negotiating table. The Special Envoy is working to advance a framework for political negotiation, and China appreciates his efforts.

The Security Council and the relevant parties remain united and continue to support the mediation efforts of the Special Envoy, including intensified efforts to promote peace and dialogue and to nudge parties in Yemen to put aside their differences with a view to starting a new round of peace talks in Sweden as soon as possible. We urge parties in Yemen to work closely with Special Envoy Griffiths to return to the track of dialogue as soon as possible and to sustain their participation in negotiation. We call on the international community and countries in the region to continue their constructive assistance to that end.

The deteriorating humanitarian situation in Yemen has attracted the close attention of the region and the world at large. The international community should increase humanitarian assistance and assist in a targeted way by providing goods such as food and medication as well as funding support to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people. The international community should also support Yemen in its efforts to improve its economy, stabilize prices, ensure safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access and meet the basic needs of the Yemeni people.

We welcome the indefinite postponement by the Yemeni Government of restrictions on certain imports. China will continue to work with the international community to jointly and expeditiously bring the issue of Yemen back on the track to seeking a political settlement so as to achieve peace, security and stability in Yemen as soon as possible.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

**Mr. Binmubarak** (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate you on your presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. I wish you and the friendly delegation of China every success. I would also like to thank you for giving us an opportunity to speak before the Council. I also thank Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Lowcock and Mr. Beasley for their briefings and for their efforts.

I would like as well to thank the humanitarian workers, in particular local teams present on the ground in Yemen. I thank the activists, humanitarian workers and our sister Ms. Rasha Jarhum, and through her Yemeni women, who deserve our gratitude given their steadfastness despite the suffering and difficulties inflicted upon them.

We are meeting today at a time when the humanitarian situation in my country is more difficult than ever. It is deteriorating from one day to the next. I will not go into the reasons, but the Council knows that the situation is the result of certain factors. That is why we cannot stop this disaster without considering its causes.

I would briefly like to address the economic, humanitarian and political situation on the ground so as to move together towards lasting solutions and understand who is working for peace, stability and ending the suffering of Yemenis and who, on the contrary, is hindering peace.

From its provisional capital in Aden, the Yemeni Government has undertaken a series of economic measures with the assistance of the Economic Committee and the Central Bank. One of those measures is Decree 75, which aims to put an end to the deterioration of the economy and the depreciation of the national currency. Those measures have allowed for an increase in the exchange rate of the Yemeni rial. It is now 648 rials to the dollar, as compared recently to 860 rials to the dollar.

Decree 75 also aims to put an end to the smuggling of oil-derived products on the black market at double the price, while also allowing Yemeni traders to enjoy a preferential exchange rate for the rial to the dollar. The Central Bank is thereby trying to control the exchange rate so that citizens can access essential foodstuffs at a reasonable price instead of having to resort to the

black market and get them at high price. However, the Federation of Yemen Chambers of Commerce and Industry, upon the request of humanitarian organizations, has suspended its mechanism for the approval of foodstuff imports so as to facilitate their entry and enhance the foodstuff reserves in the various governorates.

The Central Bank has facilitated the issuance of letters of credit for foodstuffs across Yemen. That was made possible by Saudi deposits. We have thereby been able to finance the import of wheat, rice and other essential foodstuffs to the amount of $266 million. Seventy-five per cent of those foodstuffs have been delivered to governorates that are controlled by the Houthi militias. Indeed, the Government of my country gives the same treatment to all our citizens without any discrimination.

In the light of the economic difficulties in my country and urgent needs of the population, we call on United Nations agencies in Yemen to address themselves solely the Yemeni Central Bank — and the commercial banks that are under its supervision — for all financial transfers to Yemen. We also expect that international humanitarian organizations working in Yemen will support our economy by purchasing the various products and foodstuffs from our local markets. That would strengthen the Yemeni currency and allow the Central Bank to carry out its oversight functions, in particular when it comes to implementing international resolutions concerning sanctions, the fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism. That will also allow for the creation of jobs and help strengthen the private sector, on which more than 6 million Yemeni citizens depend.

The Yemeni Government welcomes the Riyadh declaration of 14 November, which aims to identify the necessary and urgent measures to resolve the economic and humanitarian situation in Yemen with the support of brotherly and friendly countries, in order to provide the salaries for all civil servants in Yemen based on 2014 data. I would like to thank the coalition countries and all brotherly and friendly countries that have supported our country's economy. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has provided more than $60 million on a monthly basis to support oil-derivative products for power generators, achieve rial stability and combat money laundering in oil products, which constitute more than 60 per cent of the demand on foreign currency in Yemen. Meanwhile, Iran continues to support Houthi militias with ballistic missiles and land and sea mines, which are used against our people and neighbouring countries. That is a serious violation of Security Council resolutions, according to the reports issued by the Panel of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014).

On the humanitarian and political front, the Government of my country is committed to international law, international humanitarian law and human rights. We call upon the international community to put pressure on Houthi militias to allow for the quick and safe delivery of humanitarian assistance and to help humanitarian workers get access to the different regions of the country in order to deliver medical and humanitarian assistance to those who are in need of them. The Houthi militias must respect and protect schools and medical facilities, and they must not use Yemeni civilians as human shields or recruit children to send them to the battlefields.

Our people have had enough of constantly hearing talk of the violations that they are subjected to and the crimes committed against them by the Houthi militias. Suffering is inflicted upon our people on a daily basis, and the Yemenis are bitter when they see the blood of their children spilled by executioners that go unpunished. Our victims are killed twice. The first time by criminal militias and their leaders, and the second time when those crimes are ignored and the militias are allowed to continue the conflict. Victims of children and women are saying: "Do not kill us twice".

How can those who seek true peace fail to participate in the peace consultations? How can those who seek true peace take civilians, doctors and patients as human shields? How can those who seek true peace lay millions of land mines? How can those who seek true peace recruit children and youngsters who are the pillars of the future and send them to death? How can those who seek true peace besiege populated cities and their snipers kill children and women daily? How can those who seek true peace kidnap journalists, activists and teachers, throw them into prison and torture them?

I would like to respond to what Mr. Beasley said a while ago about the need for foodstuffs. The Houthi militias have just set fire to foodstuff depots belonging to a Yemeni company in Al-Hudaydah, despite suspending military operations. According to documented and media reports, Houthi militias have recruited thousands of children and taken hostage

doctors and patients of the 22 May Hospital in Al-Hudaydah. They have used those people as human shields and laid millions of mines in buildings, on roads and even in trees, according to the Associated Press. Mines have even been laid in Al-Hudaydah port at a time when they have besieged the city of Taiz for more than three years. The Houthi militias kill more women and children in Taiz every day through shelling and sniping.

The city of Taiz is waiting for international organizations to visit with delegations so that our children can tell them about their suffering. Two children, Hani Al-Ra'i, who was six years old, and Jalal Abdul Khaleq, who was eight years old, were killed by Katyusha rockets launched by Houthi militias. Nobody knows who they were; nobody knows their names. Farid Shawqi, who was five years old, cried out after being hit by a Houthi shell. He kept shouting "do not leave me", and yet he regrettably died. Dozens of other children are killed in Yemen every day as a result of sniping or shelling. Unfortunately, nobody remembers those children.

The Yemeni Government, on the other hand, has made considerable efforts, through the office of the Special Envoy, to reach an agreement on the exchange of prisoners, in particular arbitrarily detained persons, as well as those under house arrest. The Government has accepted the exchange of Houthi prisoners with those people who were arrested for nothing to do with the war. We agreed to do so because we know that our prisoners are living in extremely difficult conditions. We are ready to accept all proposals pertaining to confidence-building measures. We are ready to take all measures that would help build confidence and alleviate the suffering of our people. We appreciate the sincere efforts of the Special Envoy in this regard.

The people of Yemen expect the Security Council to do more than simply denounce the situation, issue statements and even adopt resolutions. What we expect is that the resolutions of the Council will be translated into concrete action on the ground. We still have an opportunity to reach peace. We actually have thousands of opportunities to reach just, comprehensive, sustainable and genuine peace on the basis of the three agreed terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference, and the relevant Security Council resolutions, notably resolution 2216 (2015). We need peace in order to put an end to the consequences of the coup d'état that my country has suffered and to restore States institutions. Heavy and medium weapons must be surrendered to the legitimate military institution, which has the exclusive right to own such weapons.

The Yemeni Government reiterates its position in support of the efforts of the Special Envoy to achieve peace. He intends to hold a new round of consultations, hoping that the coup party would participate in good faith in order to discuss the confidence-building measures which are proposed by the Special Envoy.

His Excellency President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour and the Yemeni Government are working hard, sincerely and in good faith to achieve peace because Yemen is the country of civilization, history and wisdom. Yemen deserves to live in dignity, peace and prosperity while united, strong and independent. We will never accept Iranian influence or the replication of the Iranian experience in our country.

The Council should stop cursing the darkness of war and humanitarian tragedies. It has to light the candle of peace and silence the guns forever.

*The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.*